

ANKUR
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**Anti-National
Humanist**



Humanist

and Publisher)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 [Introduction](#)
- 2 [Nationalist Strategies](#)
 - [Motherland/War Mode](#)
 - [Protectionism](#)
 - [Xenophobia](#)
 - [Law](#)
 - [History](#)
 - [Language](#)
 - [Culture](#)
 - [National Symbols](#)
 - [Propaganda](#)
 - [Sports](#)
 - [Consociation](#)
 - [Gangstalking](#)
- 3 [Anti-National Humanist Attributes](#)
 - [Minimal Defense Forces](#)
 - [Fake Respect to National Symbols](#)
 - [No Participation in War](#)
 - [No Non-Violence Nonsense](#)
 - [Persistent Petitioning](#)
 - [Good Health and Fitness](#)
 - [Safe Distance from Nationalists](#)
 - [Respect for Human Dignity](#)
 - [Internationalist Attitude](#)
 - [Skepticism towards Religion](#)
 - [Self-Love and Tranquility](#)
 - [No Employment in the State](#)

Resistance to Nationalism

4 Lessons from the Past

Albert Einstein

Karl Marx

Emma Goldman

Rabindranath Tagore

Leo Tolstoy

5 Answering the Question

-Notes

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INTRODUCTION

There is no idea more inchoate than that of nation. Each author has defined it differently. Anderson has defined nation as an imagined political community necessitated as such by the refashioned imagination arising from the transition of human mind from the God's omniscience to his own omniscience, gained from exposure to novels and newspapers¹. Gellner, on the other hand, has not attributed the emergence of nations to any gradual process like refashioned imagination but to a false, fabricated invention designed to coincide with the territorially existing state². The above two authors have obviously defined nations as new political entities replacing dynasties. Stalin defined nation as a historically constituted territorial political community with a common language, economic life, and culture³. Stalin's definition covers everything but fails to correspond with a single nation. Bauer, another communist, divorced culture from territory and defined nation as an intangible entity comprising of people tied by a common culture irrespective of their geographical location⁴. Hitler defined nation as a purely racial territorial entity closed to any kind of naturalization process like adoption of culture, language, etc⁵. Grosby has defined nation as a territorial community of kinship and nativity; i.e., either birth inside the national territory or naturalization is a prerequisite for the membership of the nation⁶; something closest to the Indian concept of the Hindutva nationalism⁷. Renan, a liberal nationalist, defined nation as a "daily referendum" dependant on the will of its people to continue to live together; this conception of nation is non-xenophobic compatible with liberal values of freedom, tolerance, equality, and individual rights⁸; something closest to the Indian concept of constitutional or pluralistic nationalism⁹.

The above definition of nation by Renan, though impractical, is certainly very attractive. But there is a catch. Renan, who presented his opinions in the context of nineteenth century European nations, claimed nations to be good only for that

epoch, i.e. nineteenth century, and speculated that the nations of Europe would one day be replaced by a European confederation. The European Union is certainly replacing European nations -- Brexit is an anomaly. Indian constitution calls India a union of states. By not recognizing the individual states as sovereign nations, Indian constitution, in fact, created a confederation akin to the European Union, leaving no scope for the propagation of constitutional nationalism. So, the Indian idea of constitutional or pluralistic nationalism is not nationalism *per se* but an ideological support for the already mature confederation. But for the revival of the Hindutva nationalism in the current RSS/BJP regime, India had long shelved nationalism. Those politicians and intellectuals who are wrongly interpreting Indian constitution to establish a constitutional source of nationalism as a counter to the Hindutva nationalism are actually doing a big disservice to humanity, which chose India as a flagship nation-less agglomeration of plural communities.

I won't even attempt to define nation because the intuition tells me it is a fruitless exercise, so let me accept the reality of nations as reflected in the membership of United Nations (UN) and challenge it as an anti-national humanist. But the reality is deceptive. The nations at times are as big as China and India, yet at other times they are as small as Monaco and Vatican (not a member of the UN for it cares less, but the UN has *suo-moto* granted it the permanent observer status). Incidentally, Pope once used to crown the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, who ruled over the to-be-nations of the Continental Europe, but eventually when the nations substituted the empires, they became empires themselves colonizing the rest of the world. Rabindra Nath Tagore, the great Indian poet, had serious problems with these nation-empires and with the very concept of nation-states, but he didn't propose a concrete practical solution¹⁰ -- anyways, no politician was listening to him. As it would be, India became independent and acquired all small vassal states of the suzerain, the Queen of England, for the new nation-empire had been born -- and soon the 56"

cheded will gift the "Statue of Unity" to the Indians celebrating the nation-empire! Even then, some small nations like Bhutan and Sikkim emerged but more as vassal states than sovereigns -- Sikkim later merged in India. I apprehend all small nations of the world enjoy the same fate. So, should we say the small nations like Monaco are only sham sovereigns? I am unable to answer this question without first defining the term nation but am inclined to believe that at least some small nations have found ways of sovereign political existence by virtue of their nationalism. I don't see any more relevance of the term nation: it is a territorial political entity justifying sovereignty through some argument adopted from the wide campus of the nationalism school, and its identity lies in facilitating capitalism over feudalism and; after Bauers, Lenins, and Stalins adopted nationalism; also in facilitating socialism over feudalism (not capitalism).

At the same time, the war between the nations and the empires have led to lots of bloodshed -- in the present context, it also includes the "war on terror." World War II took anywhere between 15mn to 85mn lives; World War I took anywhere between 8.5mn to 21mn lives; Mongol conquests took 30mn to 40mn lives; conquests of the Nanda empire took nearly 11mn lives; European colonization of the Americas took upto 138mn lives; Qing dynasty conquest of the Ming dynasty took around 25mn lives; second Sino-Japanese war took 20mn to 25mn lives; Napoleonic wars took upto 7mn lives; Mughal-Maratha wars took around 5.6mn lives; Indian rebellion of 1857 took around 10mn lives; even the "war on terror" has taken around 1mn lives^{[11](#)} (and this statistic can increase exponentially). It is true that with the growth of globalization, war casualties have declined, but the threats posed by the nations still loom large especially for the common men. I am a common man and am concerned about each single life, for I am not powerful enough to be an elite and just don't want to be a statistic otherwise. I am a humanist and, in this essay, I am trying to answer the question if there is a possibility of a political existence where humanists don't end up

becoming the externalities of nationalism, whether as human rights activists doubling up as nationalists or as doctors labeling the blood of the soldiers saffron, green, red, black, or white (even pacifists die in wars as soldiers or otherwise). In other words, is there a political possibility of existence of a humanist as an anti-national humanist? (I am sure the states can exist as sovereign political entities without forcing nationalism.)

Clarifications

1. When I say I am a humanist, I mean just that; i.e., I am a free self-determining individual, am a naturalist, and value human dignity. It doesn't, in any manner, mean that I subscribe to Integral Humanism of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya of Jan Sangh, India -- which was nationalism plain and simple -- or to any other such sophistry. In fact, in this essay, I am challenging all such nationalist tendencies: the focus of this essay remains anti-nationalism.

2. I have used masculine "he" in the essay to represent both male and female. I am a male; therefore, I found it more convenient and natural to use "he" than "she." The "he" unless repugnant to the context includes "she", but "she", wherever used in the essay, doesn't include "he." Regrets for this bias!

3. In the "Lessons from the Past" section of the essay, I have relied heavily on information from Wikipedia. Instead of deriving references from Wikipedia pages, I have made references to the Wikipedia pages themselves, which I think is more ethical. The war casualty statistics in the "Introduction" section are also attributed to a Wikipedia page. I have faith in Wikipedia editors and am not shy of crediting them for their hard work.

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NATIONALIST STRATEGIES

I surely don't need to define nation to define my existence as an anti-national humanist, but I do need to grasp the strategies of nationalists to answer the question posed by me above. Some actors who can easily be identified as nationalists are forces, politicians, diplomats, and bureaucrats (add judges too though it is outright unprofessional for a judge to be a nationalist, for he can't practice any ideological bias). The fact is none of them needs to be a nationalist to operate, but all of them do because they find it convenient to rule by exploiting the illusion created by the abstraction of nationalism and won't even mind a war or two to consolidate their elite existence. The only difference now is that earlier the emperors went to war by default, but now since the elite rulers disguise themselves as people's representative or public servants, they indulge in cold wars and verbal duels before going to actual wars, but the proliferation of violence is no less.

Motherland/War Mode

Forces, especially army, rely solely on nationalism to maintain their relevance and hegemony: the bigger the army, the more the chances of widespread nationalism. Nationalism at its core is militarism. It is often identified with the masculinity of forces, the sons of the soil, protecting the feminine motherland. (But why protection only of mother, not GF or wife? is GF or wife not worthy of protection? or is it because the sons of the soil are anyways raping her?) This is the foremost strategy of the nationalists. They create an illusion of a vulnerable mother under the threat of rape from aliens and call upon the sons of the soil to protect her from the rapist aliens. Then it doesn't matter whether you actually go to the border or hurl troll abuses on media garnished with pro-motherland slogans like "*Bharat Mata ki Jai.*"

Protectionism

Nations have traditionally facilitated domestic capitalism. Even though globalization has now broken the trade barriers, protectionism is still a preferred strategy of the nationalists. They give false pretense of power to the domestic industry and demand a natural nationalist disposition from the protectees, especially from small traders, businessmen, and industrialists. In India, the application of this strategy is clearly visible in Gujarat, the land of traders, businessmen, and industrialists, where actual influence of the army is negligible -- nobody joins the army from Gujarat, and most of them aspire to be NRIs (non-resident Indians) -- yet the nationalism fervor is hyperactive. In the application of this strategy, the big business is deemed to be collaborating with the state actors identified above.

Xenophobia

Parochialism comes naturally with any kind of community living. But the strategy of nationalists is more incisive. The xenophobia propagated by them is not only restricted to aversion to foreigners. They extrapolate the fear of unknown and love for inertia to extremity, leading to development of a mass attitude not only of fear but also of anxiety, further leading to irrational attacks on any thing novel including different attire, different language, different color, different race, etc. The ambience of intolerance and conservatism is advocated as a panacea to structural problems of the society, and events like mob lynching of non-conformists are justified as punishment for aberrant behavior akin to treachery.

Law

Law is one of the most effective strategy tools of the nationalists against the natural anti-national humanists. Journalists, who are supposed to operate sans border caring less about nationalism of nations, are subjected to nationalism through provisions like clause 6(1) of Cable TV Network Rules, 1994, India,

which impliedly obliges them to uphold national interest while reporting. Artists & writers, whose minds can't be controlled by national borders, are subjected to laws like Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, India. Doctors, who should service mankind without worrying about national borders when do so by forming organizations like *Médecins Sans Frontières*, are expelled from nations like Sri Lanka for breaking visa rules by working in rebel controlled areas. The mere state may dare not put hurdles in the free functioning of the above anti-national humanists, but when the state coincides with the nation, it gives leeway to the elites to per force command compliance to nationalism ideology through law. The above mentioned anti-national humanists are obviously not rebels, who would use force to challenge the elite rulers, but they do understand politics and have the faculties to challenge the elite rulers through their difficult questions. However, their intellectualism doesn't let them breach law; therefore law becomes the most effective strategy tool against them. Lawyers can be the only exceptions, but they are so involved in politics that they lose their faculties to question and become the biggest nationalism champions themselves.

History

Historians hardly have any tools to ascertain the veracity of past events. They rely on historical texts and artifacts, most of which are nothing but fiction publishing patronized by the elites. Furthermore, the ruling class interprets history suited to its own need of manipulating masses, in which the historians often become willing participants. Even if we assume historians are competent and sincere enough to present true events, history is mostly the record of political conquest of emperors. Common men hardly find any mention in it. However, nationalists find it convenient to link the conquests of the emperors, who by their very nature cared less about the masses, to the mass spirit of the common men, that too in the present times. The objective is to extract those

sacrifices which masses would have otherwise spurned as ridiculous, irrational and foolhardy.

Language

There has always been a disconnection between the elites and the masses. In older times, the disconnection manifested itself in the languages spoken by the elites and the masses. The formation of nations bridged the gap to the extent that the language of the elite and the masses became one, but that doesn't mean the vernacular got precedence over the political esolang (esoteric language). Vernaculars rather vanished and were replaced by new national esolangs, which people had to learn to survive. Single language for the whole nation is the recurring strategy of nationalists the world over, preferred for national integration. In India, several attempts have been made to establish the hegemony of Hindi (not Hindustani)¹², but the same has failed only because of the threat of national disintegration instead: India is too big and diverse to be a nation; truly a nationalist's nightmare.

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Culture

Culture is admittedly a differentiating factor between communities, but religion is not, race is not, ethnicity is not, color is not, gender is not, sexuality is not, disability is not. However, when nationalists speak of culture they just don't mean that. The Hindutva nationalists in India may theoretically differentiate Hindutva from Hindu religion, but the two are so synonymous that even the Supreme Court of India in its famous Hindutva judgment¹³ equated Hindutva to Hinduism, but failed to call the two a religion: they called it a way of life of the people living in India, which includes Muslims, Christians, Parsis, etc. But, in practice, Hindutva is nothing but a tool for polarization on the basis of religion. This artifice has been practiced for pretty long now by the Hindutva nationalists in the name of Indian culture. Moreover, formation of a nation just on the basis

of different culture is also questionable. If Renan's definition of a nation is to be accepted, different cultures can co-exist in a same nation. Culture distinguishes communities, not necessarily nations. However, since it has now become a norm to define a nation by its culture, it is identified as an essential strategy tool of the nationalists, albeit in a corrupted form.

National Symbols

Generally, national anthems/songs are well composed and hummable numbers, so there should be no problem singing them. However, nationalists irritatingly force people to not only sing but also to stand in a particular attentive pose while singing, even in cinema halls, which is ridiculous. Sometimes the national anthem competes with the national song. In India, the Hindutva nationalists have not come to terms with the adoption of the national anthem written by Rabindra Nath Tagore over the national song written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. So, each time the national anthem is mentioned, demands are also made to respect the national song, which is a lengthy piece written in Bengali, thus incomprehensible to the majority including the Hindutva nationalists. This is the silliest form of nationalism, where one school of nationalism competes with another within the same apparent nation. National flag demands another sort of respect by the nationalists. Don't wear t-shirts resembling national flag; don't hoist the non-ironed national flag; if you fly *Tiranga* (Indian flag) kite, make sure you don't lose the fight against *Chand-Tara* (Pakistani flag) kite. I wonder who ever gives true respect to these national symbols, but since symbols act as effective psychological tools to create peer pressure, their reinforcement is a strategy strongly practiced by nationalists.

Propaganda

Nationalists can't operate without propaganda. They obviously influence all kinds of media: newspapers & magazines, movies, books, social media, word of

mouth. Their influence is however not piecemeal. They work with a propaganda strategy. The propaganda is directed towards creating an environment where hegemony of nationalism is taken for granted. The army is never condemned in any forum whatsoever. National anthem is sung even in cinema halls. Slogans praising motherland like "*Bharat Mata ki Jai*" are shouted by default in official meetings, sports events, court premises, TV studios, and, of course, streets. Anti-nationalism is automatically equated to rebellion. War memorials are built and worshipped. Army drills are shown on national TV. Any argument whatsoever is weighed on its compatibility with nationalism. All communications, official or non-official, are closed with nationalist salutations like "*Jai Hind.*" Such an atmosphere automatically directs all media towards nationalism as absence of nationalism signals in media makes them conspicuous for punitive actions like revenue loss, legal prosecution, boycott, or even shut down.

Sports

Nothing else infuses nationalism fervor like sports (with the exception of may be actual war). Support for national team is almost natural, even for anti-nationalists. Sports, however, predate nations. People naturally support those whom they associate with territorially, whether as nations, tribes, communities, or even empires. Nationalists have appropriated sports, and this strategy of theirs is invincible. How can you ask someone or even expect someone to not support the national team?

Consociation

Ruling elites are most terrified of other power claimants viz. the corporate (including media houses), intellectuals, activists, celebrities/influencers, journalists, lawyers, etc. The strategy of consociation, i.e. power sharing, works pretty well with them. Though the strategy of consociation *per se* doesn't have any direct link with nationalism, but the two gel pretty well supplying a superior

raison d'être for power sharing than mere mutual benefit. Thus those who are accommodated into power sharing become nationalists by default. Journalists, intellectuals, lawyers, etc., are accommodated as nominated MPs, advisors, track II diplomats, etc.; the corporate are accommodated through preferential law & policy, subsidies, and governance outsourcing; activists are accommodated through financial grants, membership of policy groups, etc.; celebrities/influencers are granted high status through numerous state sponsored awards. However, it is more difficult to accommodate celebrities; therefore, intelligence agencies and politicians proactively restrict entry into the celebrity group allowing it only to the conformists, including through YouTubes and Twitters; in reference to social media, the intelligence agencies collaborate with the corporate, especially IT entrepreneurs, for celebrity calibration; one may also conclude that, in this age of YouTube and Twitter, celebrity calibration has been outsourced to the corporate with the intervention of intelligence agencies in identified cases only.

Gangstalking

Gangstalking is stalking someone 24x7 in an organized manner using gangs of spies. This strategy is mostly adopted by intelligence agencies. However, I am referring to it here as a nationalist strategy first because all intelligence officers are nationalists and secondly because gang stalking is the brain child of Hitler. Hitler, in his book *Mein Kampf*, recommended gangstalking through "brown shirts" as a legitimate political strategy to harass, isolate, neutralize, and even kill anti-nationalists¹⁴. However, gangstalking didn't end with Hitler. Nationalists, going by whatsoever name, follow Hitler. It is present in India for sure: the Hindutva nationalists do it, whether in collaboration with intelligence agencies or otherwise. Unlike other strategies, this is a direct strategy to attack the perceived enemy. Execution of the strategy is expensive, yet it is followed almost irrationally. If conspiracy theories are to be believed, Narendra Modi, the

Indian Prime Minister (PM), expanded this strategy into a mass strategy in Gujarat making each common man a spy harassing rumored anti-nationalists. I have never visited Gujarat on a long term basis -- thankfully -- so, I can't make a concrete claim, but, logically, it is difficult to execute this strategy on a mass scale.

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ANTI-NATIONAL HUMANIST ATTRIBUTES

Having noted down the important strategies of nationalists, it is opportune to define the existence of an anti-national humanist in terms of his non-negotiable attributes.

Minimal Defense Forces

An anti-national humanist is not an anarchist. He is not against the state. His only problem is with nation and nationalism because it interferes with his disposition to uphold human dignity. It is true that a state needs to maintain minimal self-defense to maintain its sovereignty, with which an anti-national humanist should have no problem. Rather, he would highly value the sacrifice of a soldier in monetary terms, which nationalists replace by the illusion of nationalism reinforced through gallantry awards. But an anti-national humanist would not accept the hegemony of defense forces in the political strategies of a state in the name of nationalism. He would definitely question disproportionate budgetary allocation to defense. He would surely not ignore human right violations by defence forces (especially when an international agency of high repute would mark them in a report). He would not call anybody a terrorist if the word has not been defined by any international institution of high repute. He will see with suspicion all claims of "war on terror". He will definitely not promote militarism. Minimal defense forces is the first non-negotiable of an anti-national humanist.

Fake Respect to National Symbols

For an anti-national humanist, national anthem/songs are nothing more than songs. If they are good, he shall respect the song as well as the composer; if not, he shall mostly ignore them. However, if they are obliged to be respected by law, an anti-national humanist shall show them fake respect to avoid prosecution. He

may also respect these things to avoid mob lynching. At the end of the day, an anti-national humanist is not an idiot. However, this fraudulence can't be carried into the profession. He shall not make deliberate attempts to denigrate national symbols, but if the situation is such that the freedom of expression requires disrespect, he shall disrespect or not depending upon his general risk aversion and sincerity towards his profession. If he, as a writer, stays away from disrespecting religion, he may so stay away from disrespecting national symbols, flags, songs, and anthems as well; and if he is a risk taker, he would break law as he would in any other circumstance. Nationalism *per se* shall not determine his attitude.

No Participation in War

There is no question of an anti-national humanist joining any war, civil or international, whether as a soldier or otherwise. If the law of the land of his domicile country provides for conscription, he shall rather leave the country. If any deserter seeks his protection, he shall do the needful depending upon his capability to protect the deserter as well as himself from law and men. In general, a deserter should see him as a source of protection, but I must say it is easier said than done. Gautam Buddha, who left his kingdom when forced to join war^{[15](#)}, didn't provide shelter to deserters even when he was at the zenith of his career as a sage^{[16](#)}. However, times have changed, and now an anti-national humanist can probably exercise better discretion -- moreover, Gautam Buddha was not an anti-national humanist as nations were non-existent at that time. In any case, not joining war himself is the essential attribute of an anti-national humanist. If he is forced to join war, he shall consider it as slavery and make all attempts to seek freedom.

No Non-Violence Nonsense

An anti-national humanist is not a Gandhian. He will certainly resort to violence

to defend himself, his property, and others, as the case may be. He shall not violently attack anybody, even in a pre-emptive attack, but he shall carry out hot pursuit even if it wouldn't fall in the category of self-defense. Violence is not only physical abuse. It also includes verbal abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and economic abuse. Out of these, verbal abuse is less piercing. So, wherever necessary an anti-national humanist would try to restrict himself to verbal abuse -- it can also be used as an attack on social media, but beeps are preferable. But, of course, physical abuses, emotional abuses, economic abuses, sexual abuses, etc., can't be retaliated with mere verbal abuse. In fact, since anti-national humanists are expected to be in minority for a long future, they are expected to retaliate with full vigor in all forms possible except may be sexual abuse. An anti-national humanist is expected to procure arms for self-protection in accordance with the law of the land. Simply speaking, an anti-national humanist is a realist, not an idealist, and reality demands use of violence in unavoidable situations, and so will he do.

Persistent Petitioning

The politics that an anti-national humanist better understands is that of petitioning the institutions. Since power generally resides with those who control resources, and an anti-national humanist's strongest resource for a long time to come is expected to be publicly available information and bookish knowledge, he is expected to fail in politics otherwise than as a petitioner. Petitioning is, however, a tedious and tiring process, so not all anti-national humanists may be able to practice petitioning forever, especially when no results are forthcoming. In such circumstances, an anti-national humanist may chose to find a niche and stop struggling for power. If, however, he is forced to practice party politicking to sustain life, he shall seek help from other anti-national humanists, failing which he will either do party politicking or join a rebel force than die as an anti-national humanist. An anti-national humanist can be a persistent petitioner, not a

romantic martyr.

Good Health and Fitness

Fitness is essential for an anti-national humanist. Ideally, he should master at least some martial arts, but if he doesn't, he should adequately train himself for stamina and strength. Fitness training for an anti-national humanist may not mean rock climbing or parkouring, but it doesn't mean mere Yoga exercises either. Calisthenics, running/jogging, aerobics, swimming, or some physically strenuous sporting activity should necessarily form part of his daily regimen. If his medical condition doesn't allow him to carry out the above training, he should at least sleep well and walk regularly. Ideally, an anti-national humanist should not suffer from poor health. However, if he suffers from some ailment beyond his control, he should try to get rid of it as soon as possible. In any case, he shouldn't do things to worsen his ill-health. Natural remedies are preferable for minor illnesses. In general, knowledge is the key to good health, and an anti-national humanist would take keen interest in maintaining good health through application of science. Health and fitness are important for an anti-national humanist because he doesn't have the luxury of state protection, at least not till the nations cease to exist (if ever). If nothing else, he will have to run for his life when the occasion arises.

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Safe Distance from Nationalists

An anti-national humanist obviously can't be a close friend of a nationalist, but if one is for whatever reasons, that's personal. However, an anti-national humanist won't bring his friendship with a nationalist into public forums except unless it is a blood relationship or a marriage. Since an anti-national humanist is essentially a knowledge person, he will naturally engage in dialogue with all including nationalists, but that's professional, not personal. Such professional interactions

shouldn't ordinarily lead to any kind of personal relationship (except may be a one-off sexual encounter, which would anyways be private). Safe distance of an anti-national humanist from a nationalist in public forums is natural. When it remains no more natural, either the anti-national humanist is deemed to have become a nationalist or *vice versa* unless the relationship predates the realization as an anti-national humanist -- one is not expected to break old friendships for whatever reason.

Respect for Human Dignity

An anti-national humanist may not be a human rights activist, but he surely is a human rights respecter. Human rights are generally understood as negative rights like right to life, right to freedom, right to property, right to privacy, etc.; positive rights like right to food, right to shelter, right to education, etc.; and intergenerational rights like right to environment, right to social security, right to elderly care, etc. An anti-national humanist's main obligation would be towards negative rights; i.e., he won't kill anybody, won't illegally confine or traffic anybody, won't trespass or encroach another's property, won't infringe anybody's privacy, etc.; but, of course, if he has means, he will also provide food and shelter to the needy; in any case, he can always educate others. Intergenerational rights are tricky; they should ideally oblige an anti-national humanist to restrain himself from using energy intensive durables, especially ACs and refrigerators; should oblige him to visit old-age shelters and provide pensions to senior citizens. But such things are better reserved for human right activists and states. An ordinary anti-national humanist would treat inter-generational rights in their modified form as negative rights; i.e., he will follow law with respect to these rights, but won't ordinarily take any voluntary positive action -- yes, an anti-national humanist enjoys luxury and he would keep using ACs and refrigerators as do others; he is not a Spartan.

An anti-national humanist's respect for human rights is part of his respect for

human dignity, which also includes a general attitude promoting dialogue and compromise, openness and tolerance, acceptance of human fallibility, protection of nature (flora and fauna both), justice, equality, secularism (not the Indian secularism¹⁷), democracy, etc. Let it be clarified, his idea of equality is not a failure to differentiate self from others and to differentiate "unique, irreplaceable others¹⁸" (close friends, families, etc.) from other human beings. He understands these fine nuances of relationships and considers it as part of human dignity to show preference to a close friend or a wife, towards whom he has personal obligations.

Internationalist Attitude

An anti-national humanist is more importantly an anti-nationalist than an internationalist. His attitude is rather negative towards the ideology of nationalism than positive towards any rival ideology like globalism, religionism, or Marxism. However, since nationalism is basically parochialism, any opposition to it should bring in at least some form of internationalism as a practical necessity. This internationalism may be practiced by affiliation to some established internationalist ideology, by association with international institutions, by recourse to international sources of knowledge, through internet or social media activism, through advanced studies in foreign countries, through employment in multinational corporations or international organizations, by membership of international bodies or groups, by international travel, by international friendship or by any other such means. The bottom line is that internationalism is a practical necessity for an anti-national humanist first because nationalists themselves organize pretty well internationally and secondly because anti-national humanists are in minority: the more they exploit international resources, the better are their chances of survival.

Skepticism towards Religion

As far as anti-nationalism *per se* is concerned, religion is irrelevant because religion *per se* cannot lead to any kind of nationalism theoretically. Ruhollah Khomeini, who was instrumental in formation of the theistic state of Iran, is often classified as an anti-nationalist. However, since in this essay I am concerned more about practical realities of nations than their theoretical possibilities, I am classifying theistic states like Iran also as nations. Also the humanists are generally atheists though I agree humanism is tolerant enough to admit purely cultural aspects of religion if they do so qualify irrespective of the role of god or supernatural otherwise. In fact if one were to peel layers, one would find elements of humanism in all religions, but peeling layers for identifying humanism is a tricky job. Also nationalists, like the Hindutva nationalists in India, have cleverly conflated elements of nationalism with religion under the banner of cultural nationalism overriding all aspects of humanism in religion. Therefore, it is better to maintain an overall attitude of skepticism towards religion and accept humanism, as distinguished from nationalism, of religion only on receipt of extraordinary evidence.

Self-Love and Tranquility

Self-love is very important for an anti-national humanist. He is an individualist to the core. He may take up public service or activism, but that shouldn't intrude into his private life. He values repose for the reason that it is necessary to make cool-headed important decisions of life. He may or may not do meditation, for he prefers better sleep. He doesn't lead hyperactive life sans any opportunity for introspection. He believes in energy conservation; therefore, he makes fewer mistakes. His love for himself gets extended into the love for others; therefore, his connections are not limited only to humans: he may connect with nature, machine, books, stars, plants, animals, birds, and even god for that matter, but without losing humanism.

No Employment in the State

In the present paradigm, the states are also nations. Therefore, nationalism is omnipresent in a state's operations. At lower decision making levels, it doesn't matter much because resistance to nationalism is possible; however, at higher decision making levels, it is impossible; therefore, an anti-national humanist can't seek employment in a state at higher decision making levels unless he wants to intrude into the state machinery as a spy, but since anti-national humanists are not rebels, they don't need to intrude into the state machinery. So, there is no scope for employment in a state at higher decision making levels for an anti-national humanist. However, this doesn't restrain anti-national humanists from forming or joining anti-national political parties, fighting and winning elections thereof, and running states thereby as anti-national humanists. Democracy is not the handmaiden of nationalists.

Resistance to Nationalism

Resistance to nationalism is the *raison d'être* of anti-national humanist existence. The nationalist propaganda is directed towards creating the illusion of nation, and the anti-national humanist is determined towards breaking the illusion. Though it is difficult to imagine, but the dream should be to annihilate nationalism like fascism. However, an anti-national humanist's resistance to nationalism should first be focused on understanding the nationalist strategies. Only when the existence has been consolidated, the luxury of dreams can be entertained.

(Do have a look at my other book [Annapurna Circuit Trek: Fairy Tale of Love with Nature](#))

LESSONS FROM THE PAST

There have been anti-nationalists abound though not all became famous. The first name that comes to mind who would qualify both as an anti-nationalist and as a humanist is Albert Einstein; Karl Marx, Emma Goldman, Rabindranath Tagore, Leo Tolstoy are other names that appear as anti-nationalists. Some of the above names were more of anarchists than anti-nationalists. However, since in the present paradigm, nations and states are synonymous, it wouldn't be completely out of place to include them here. There must have been many more known and unknown anti-nationalists, who might have practiced anti-nationalist existence with greater vigor, but either I haven't read them or I am oblivious to them. My objective in this section is not to eulogize the above names but to criticize them for their failures -- celebrity worship is not my creed.

Albert Einstein¹⁹

Albert Einstein was a stateless person for at least five years of his life from 1896-1901 after renouncing his German citizenship to avoid military service, where after he acquired the citizenship of Switzerland in 1901 (but was not conscripted for medical reason), and also that of the USA in 1940, but remained an anti-nationalist for life except may be for a small duration when he lent his support to a letter to the US President Roosevelt recommending that the US should engage in nuclear weapons research. He championed the idea of a global government, which would subjugate the nation states in a world federation framework. He was also an eyesore for intelligence agencies: the FBI created a secret dossier on him from 1932 unto his death. He was also a well known humanist. He served on the advisory board of First Humanist Society of New York and was also an honorary associate of the Rationalist Association. His essays on humanism find traction even now. He was also an object of Nazi hatred. His works were targeted in the Nazi book burnings. He was included in a list of enemies of the German regime with the phrase "not yet hanged" in a

German magazine. The attitude of the Nazis towards him in specific and towards the Jews in general, it seems, prompted him to lend his support to the infamous letter.

In my view, his lending support to the letter to the US President made him a party to the World War II. Undoubtedly, a nuclear bomb in the hands of Hitler would have been disastrous, but the fact remains the USA is the only nation till date to have used nuclear weapons and, I say, is majorly responsible for the nuclear race during Cold War -- Soviet Russia started the policy of nuclear one-upmanship with the USA only after the Cuban crisis of 1962. Of course, Einstein can't be blamed for the cold war or the nuclear race, but he can certainly be blamed for taking sides between nations. To me, he lost his anti-nationalism the moment he impliedly joined the World War II, which was his failure. Though I will have to admit that Einstein later repented his decision to lend support to the infamous letter, but this only bolsters my argument that an anti-national humanist needs to remain out of all kinds of wars, whatever the circumstances.

Karl Marx²⁰

Karl Marx was stateless from the year 1845 to 1883 (when he died at the age of 64). Marx had humanist disposition right from his adolescence thanks to his father. He acquired a degree in law followed by a PhD on a controversial thesis that theology must yield to the superior wisdom of philosophy. Of course he considered an academic career but was forced to take up journalism because of the then German government's growing intolerance towards classical liberalism. France was his land of action, where he also met his lifelong friend Engels, and the duo delved into the world of political economy culminating in the production of three-volume series called *Capital*, two volumes of which were edited and published after Marx's death by Engels. However, the journey was not smooth as he was expelled from France in the year 1845 on the request of the Prussian king, where after he remained stateless till his death. Actually, Marx was not an anti-nationalist by choice. He was forced to be an anti-nationalist because of his

humanist tendencies. It is important to note that though such a situation as in the case of Marx can't arise for a humanist now courtesy the UN Convention on Statelessness, but it can still lead to a marginalized existence within the state.

But not being able to check state oppression is not Marx's failure. His biggest failure in life was his ill-health. Marx was troubled by poor health. He had liver and gall problems, which were aggravated by his bad lifestyle. He was predisposed to nocturnal work and faulty diet. He also boozed and smoked copiously. And when he suffered serious nervous disorder in 1877 stretching his insomnia, he fought it with narcotics. Ironically, he was saved of compulsory military service in his teens due to poor health, which helped him become a perfect humanist (almost), but not an anti-nationalist. He flirted with politics by joining First International in 1864, where he was involved in a struggle against the anarchists, and which struggle he won, but soon the First International itself became non-influential and drew Marx decisively towards the study of political economy. Marxism, which is a combination of Hegel's dialectics, French utopian socialism, and English economics, is a time-tested failure. Had Marx involved himself more into politics than mere writing, it is possible the genius in Marx had produced a practical sustainable system of humanism, which might have even pre-empted fascism and saved humanity from the nations and the World Wars. But of course these are all speculations; what is more definitive is that the ill-health of Marx must have kept him away from the rigors of political activity. Thus I attribute Marx's failure as a politician -- mostly as an anti-national humanist -- to his ill-health, which all anti-national humanists need to take note of.

Emma Goldman^{[21](#)}

Emma Goldman was described as the most dangerous woman in America. Her fault: "loose character" feminism, atheism, militant anarchism, and above all her love for words. She was a prolific writer and speaker on issues as eclectic as prisons, militarism, capitalism, freedom of speech, atheism, free love, marriage,

and even homosexuality. But she was far more active as an anarchist and far more radical as a feminist to be recognized as a theoretical thinker. However, she was forgotten as an anarchist after her death only to be re-discovered as a feminist and an anarchist in 1970's, ironically because of what she wrote than what she did. What she did is, nevertheless, very relevant.

As a "loose character" feminist, she would experience her first erotic sensation with a servant; wouldn't marry for her father but for love; would be raped by a suitor; would discover on her wedding night that her loving husband was an impotent and would ditch him eventually; would make her mentor her "true lover" for life; would try funding her and her lover's militant anarchist scheme through prostitution with or without the knowledge of her lover; would get ditched by her "true lover" for a younger woman and blame it on the prison sufferings of her lover and would remain friends forever; would enter into a "free love" affair with another man but maintain fidelity nevertheless; but would eventually marry yet another man to get British citizenship in spite of being a feminist and an anarchist.

As a militant anarchist, she would conspire with her lover to kill an industrialist; would apparently incite riots; would not condemn the assassin of the US president McKinley in spite of preposterously getting booked as a co-conspirator; would retreat from the world on receiving outright condemnation for supporting the assassin but won't budge; would oppose conscription and US involvement in the World War I and get booked under the Espionage Act, the USA; would get deported from the US under the Anarchist Exclusion Act, the USA; would condemn Soviet Government in a dinner attended by people like Bertrand Russell and H. G. Wells and get condemned for it; but would also represent CNT-FAI, the anarchist organizations of Spain, who infamously joined coalition government in 1937 against all anarchist principles, and would even relish them calling her their "spiritual mother."

To me, Emma Goldman was an extraordinary woman, but it remains a mystery

why she made such compromises with her core values. A "loose character" feminist and an anarchist marrying for British citizenship! A militant anarchist and an atheist relishing being called "spiritual mother" by failed anarchists!

I think the answer to the above lies in one of her letters to her "true lover", in which she wrote, *"I fear I am forever doomed to remain public property and to have my life worn out through the care for the lives of others."* Of course, she longed for self-love, and the above two incidents were outlets for expression of self-love, which were not questioned by those who even questioned her dancing because she reached a stage in life where she could appropriate personal space from the public without being condemned as a hypocrite, but I am condemning her because as I said, *"celebrity worship is not my creed."* She would have avoided my condemnation had she shown consistency in self-love throughout her life, but of course I wouldn't have known it for it would have been private, or may be not because self-love practiced in the tranquility of private life radiate in the public life making the person charismatic, in which Emma Goldman failed. I think lack of self-love is the biggest failure of Emma Goldman.

Rabindranath Tagore²²

Rabindranath Tagore was a humanist, an internationalist, a Dalit activist, and an anti-nationalist, yet two nations, India and Bangladesh, adopted his songs as their national anthems. His humanist credentials are beyond doubt: he impregnated naturalism in his essays (*Visva Parichay*, 1937), his stories (*Se*, 1937, *Tin Sangi*, 1940, and *Galpasalpa*, 1941), and also in his poetry; he even rebuked Gandhi for blaming *Karma* for an earthquake killing thousands in Bihar in 1934. However, his anti-nationalist credentials leave scope for doubt. He is generally believed to have had an ambivalent attitude towards nationalism. He supported Indian nationalists till 1917, but then became a strong critic of Swadeshi movement, around which time were also published his famous essays on nationalism²³.

He was surely an anti-nationalist reflected in the fact that he abhorred nation-states of the Europe colonizing Asia and Africa. His main contention was mechanization of empires by the apparent nation-states leading to structural problems in the society and loss of humanity in the man. In fact, he even condoned earlier empires to the extent they were loose structures leaving long gaps for organic permeation of micro level values in the macro level governance structures. He found it paradoxical that the banner of freedom in the West was iron-chaining the East. He called the domination of machines and organizations over individuals as mental slavery leading to widespread paranoia. He called nations the unaesthetic creation of the man destroying the aesthetic nature. Therefore, he found the problems faced by India not political but social, which the formation of a new nation wouldn't solve. He found the main problem to be that of unity of races, which was also a global problem, and whose solution lay not in formation of political nations but in formation of a tolerant, non-xenophobic global society comprehending the world of men with love, not "fractional groups of nationality."

Tagore's critique of Swadeshi movement is best exemplified in his novel *The Home and the World*, 1916 (*Ghare Baire*). The plot is a love triangle between Nikhil, Bimala, and Sandeep. Nikhil is a laidback reserved man married to a homely girl Bimala, who is wooed by Nikhil's friend Sandeep, a radical Swadeshi activist. Leaving the love triangle aside, the main political conflict between Nikhil and Sandeep is with respect to their attitudes towards foreign goods. Nikhil likes them whereas Sandeep abhors them. The critics have resisted themselves from comparing Nikhil to Tagore and Sandeep to Gandhi, but I think my purpose in this essay will be served best by doing just that. Tagore was an anti-nationalist, who was more accepting of Western goods and ideas, whereas Gandhi, though being an outwardly pacifist, was an inwardly violent, xenophobic nationalist (it seems Renan was wrong: nationalism in any form eventually leads to xenophobia) forcing his ideas and opinions even through

emotional blackmailing. The novel contrasts the ways of an anti-nationalist and a nationalist in wooing their love interest. Sandeep leads Bimala towards theft in the name of nationalism, whereas Nikhil sets her free in spite of the knowledge of Sandeep's tendencies.

I find no ambivalence in Tagore's approach towards nationalism. His was rather a thought well ahead of time. However, his failure was unnecessary and avoidable association with the nationalists: he even worked out a compromise between Ambedkar and Gandhi on Dalit representation issue. This closeness to the nationalists rendered him a nationalist in public perception. Not many people have time and energy to delve into details to understand a person truly. This is even more so relevant today when WhatsApp rumours can even lead to deaths. Tagore's failure to win the perception battle is a lesson for anti-national humanists to maintain safe distance from nationalists.

Leo Tolstoy²⁴

Leo Tolstoy was a Christian anarchist and a pacifist. He valued human dignity, but naturalism was not his ideology. He was influenced by Schopenhauer, who infused Indian idea of universal self (*Ātman/Brahman*) into the Western philosophy by extending the Kantian self into the universal self/Will, thereby reducing a self-determining individual of Kant to a naught²⁵ -- which I think is the biggest chicanery in philosophy till date. Since Tolstoy followed Schopenhauer, he can't be called a self-determining individual either. So, I won't categorize him as a humanist, but, by being an anarchist, he was certainly an anti-nationalist. His conversion from a privileged society author to the spiritual anarchist was brought about by his army experience.

Tolstoy was happily married to a friend (with whom he shared his sexual past), a secretary, an editor, a literary agent, a publicist, and a manager, all clubbed into one word, wife. However, Tolstoy had different ideas of good life. He believed in an ascetic existence through anarcho-communism. He even started advocating

chastity and sexual abstinence while his wife bore thirteen children. All this obviously turned his wife away from him and also made her his vocal opponent calling him a hypocrite, who preached and practiced differently, enjoying luxury while preaching abstinence. She also developed an aversion for Tolstoy's disciples, who seem to have better access to Tolstoy than herself. He died while traveling after secretly departing from his wife in the dead of a winter night after 48 years of marriage.

There are striking similarities between Tolstoy and Gandhi. Gandhi was of course influenced by Tolstoy. Gandhi also preached sexual abstinence and started experimenting celibacy with several women in peculiar ways including sleeping with a young girl²⁶, which I find highly hypocritical. But of course Gandhi was also a nationalist, which thankfully Tolstoy wasn't.

I think Tolstoy's excessive tilt towards religion was the root cause of his disturbed marital life. It is difficult to say whether his disturbed marital life affected his professional life. Tolstoy's best work like *War and Peace* (1865-69), *Anna Karenina* (1873-77), *Resurrection* (1899), span almost his entire professional life, so it doesn't look like his professional life was so affected. But it seems his wife didn't get the credit she deserved. It is normal in patriarchal societies for males to live highly successful professional lives with the secretarial support of their wives but without the wife getting any public credit for it except some patronizing praises. I find it obnoxious.

It is true married life is private, but one can't avoid intruding into it if the wife publicly claims domestic violence. I think depriving a wife of her conjugal rights is as violent as treating her as a mere sex object. The family comes in the category of "unique, irreplaceable others²⁷", towards whom a person has personal obligations. Not being able to fulfill these obligations, to me, is an attack on human dignity. One should either break up the marriage or fulfill one's responsibilities. Tolstoy's biggest failure is of course his irresponsible attitude towards marriage.

(Indian PM Narendra Modi is also guilty of the same attitude towards marriage, but, of course, he is not even remotely comparable to Tolstoy as a personality otherwise.)

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ANSWERING THE QUESTION

Now it's time to answer the question posed by me above; i.e., is there a political possibility of existence of a humanist as an anti-national humanist? I will have to admit I don't have the answer yet. Ideally, how one lives one's life shouldn't matter to anybody, but the reality is different. I have an intuitive feeling that soon nationalism will become irrelevant. But the recent trend defies my intuition. The USA, England, France, Germany, Italy, China, Russia, India: almost everywhere nationalism has registered a recent growth. Generally I take recourse to fictional prose or poetry when faced with such a dilemma. I think I will write something in that style soon, which should answer the above question. Expect a sequel to this essay in the form of a short story, a novella, or a poem.

Till then, I welcome you to enjoy this essay and my other books through the link: <http://ankurmutreja.com/books-by-ankur-mutreja>. Start a dialogue with me: I wish to connect with as many anti-national humanists as possible. You can contact me through the link: <http://ankurmutreja.com/introduction-of-ankur-mutreja>. You may also checkout my blog at <http://ankurmutreja.com>. In case you wish to contribute financially, you may send me your donations at 9868893525 (PayTM), Mutreja@PayTM (UPI), and ankur.mutreja@gmail.com (PayPal). Thanks.

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NOTES

1. See Anderson Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 2006)
2. See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Basil Blackwell, 1983)
3. See J. V. Stalin, *Marxism and the National Question, January 1913* (Marxist Internet Archive: www.marxists.org)
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5. See Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf: My Struggle* (General Press, 2013)
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8. See Ernest Renan, *What is a Nation?*, March 11, 1882 (University of California, Paris: <https://ucparis.fr>)
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10. See Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism: Nationalism in the West; Nationalism in Japan; Nationalism in India; The Sunset of the Century* (University of California Library vide MSN, the digitizing sponsor, of The Book Club of California, 1917, publication; available at Internet Archive: www.archive.org)
11. See Wikipedians, *List of Wars and Anthropogenic Disaster by Death Toll* (Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/list_of_wars_and_antropogenic_disasters_by_death)
12. See Ramchandra Guha, *Sub-chapter IX in Chapter 6: Ideas of India* in *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (Pan Books, 2010)

13. See Justice J. S. Verma, *Ramesh Yashwant Prabhoo v. Prabhakar Kashinath*: 1996 AIR 1113 (Supreme Court of India, December 11, 1995; available at Indian Kanoon: <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/925631>)

14. See 5 above

15. See B. R. Ambedkar, *Book One: Siddharth Gautam - How a Bodhisitta became the Buddha* in *Buddha and his Dhamma* (Unpublished) in *Selected Works of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* (available at <https://drambedkarbooks.wordpress.com>)

16. See B. R. Ambedkar, *Book Six: He and his Contemporaries*, Pg in *Buddha and his Dhamma* (Unpublished) in *Selected Works of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*, Pg 515-517 (available at <https://drambedkarbooks.wordpress.com>)

17. See 9 above

18. See Peter Derkx, *The Future of Humanism* in Andrew Copson and A. C. Grayling, *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Humanism* (Wiley Blackwell, 2015)

19. See Wikipedians, *Albert Einstein* (Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Einstein)

20. See Wikipedians, *Karl Marx* (Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Marx)

21. See Wikipedians, *Emma Goldman* (Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emma_Goldman)

22. See Wikipedians, *Rabindranath Tagore* (Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabindranath_Tagore)

23. See 10 above

24. See Wikipedians, *Leo Tolstoy* (Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_Tolstoy)

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